Bismarck State College

Aug 6, 2007

Thank you, Senator Dorgan, for that introduction and for your leadership and commitment to developing this nation's fossil and renewable resources as well as the human capital necessary to the .

Within the Department of energy, the Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability leads the national efforts to modernize the electricity delivery system; enhance the security and reliability of America's energy infrastructure; and facilitate recovery from disruptions to energy supply. These objectives cause little controversy and are easily spoken, but in practice they can be very difficult to achieve.

However, the 2005 Energy Policy Act contains a number of significant provisions designed to help achieve these objectives.

It does so by encouraging the advance of renewable sources of energy and their penetration into the generation mix; by facilitating, when necessary, the expansion of our energy infrastructure, and by encouraging the development of new sources of fuel for the transportation sector.

But perhaps most importantly, its adoption into law demonstrated that the goal of energy security is one shared by the President, the Congress and the public.

And the state of North Dakota is contributing a great deal through the development and construction of new, clean sources of generation to meet our nation's future electricity needs, the responsible production of your oil, gas, and coal resources; and in training the capable, qualified individuals to operate this complex system.

The Department will continue to support this effort through the continued research of storage technologies to capture and levelize intermittent sources of energy; through a new focus on overcoming the engineering challenges to Renewable and Distributed Systems Integration, and by implementing the Energy Policy Act requirements to analyze transmission congestion, and, where appropriate, propose the designation of energy corridors to facilitate the construction of new transmission to meet the nation's electricity needs.

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But, of course, we cannot simply focus on the physical capabilities of the electric system. The nation's power engineering education system is at a critical point. Without strong support for strategic research in power systems engineering and without qualified replacements for retiring faculty, the strength of our Nation's university-based power engineering programs will wane, and along with them, the foundation for innovation in the power sector to meet the energy challenges of the 21st century.

That's why I am pleased to be with you today as we commemorate the Secretary of Energy's designation of Bismarck State College as a National Power Plant Operations Technology and Education Center. Among the many reasons for Bismarck's selection are your Bachelors programs in electric power generation, transmission and distribution technologies; the expertise you provide in both onsite and Internet-based training; and your general responsiveness to the power industry's workforce and training requirements.

It is a fact that increasing the production of North Dakota's energy resources and enabling the transmission of the resultant electricity to homes and businesses across the region, will bring us one step closer to our goal of greater energy security. And we are confident that Bismarck will play an important role in addressing the need for the trained and certified operators and technicians, who run and maintain this great, national energy system.

On behalf of the Secretary of Energy, I am very pleased to congratulate Bismark State College and Dr. Larry Skogen on Bismarck's designation as a National Power Plant Operations Technology and Education Center.